COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
State Board of Elections

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Cameron Quinn
804-786-6551

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS APPROVES NEW VOTING EQUIPMENT
- First New Equipment Certifications since 1995 -

The State Board of Elections has approved two new models of state-of-the-art voting equipment for use in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This is the first new equipment certified for Virginia elections since January 1995.

Meeting earlier this week, the Board certified the iVotronic[TM] Touch Screen voting system, manufactured by Election Systems & Software (ES&S), and the AccuTouch TSR6 voting system manufactured by Global Election Systems. On both models, the voter indicates his choices by touching a computerized screen containing the ballot. As mandated by the State Board's certification standards for new equipment, both models are also adaptable for nonvisual use.

The newly-certified equipment was tested during last November's general election -- the ES&S model in selected precincts of Henrico and Prince William Counties, and the Global model in selected precincts of the City of Norfolk. State law requires that equipment be tested in a May or November general election prior to certification.

Four other companies have equipment that is currently going through the Virginia certification process: Avante International Technology, Inc., Hart Interactive, Shoup Voting Solutions, and Unilect.

The Code of Virginia requires that the State Board of Elections approve any mechanical or electronic voting system or equipment before it can be used by any locality.

As set forth in the Virginia Voting Systems and Equipment Certification Guidelines (Revised 6/22/99), the voting system or equipment must:
- Comply with the applicable provisions of the Code of Virginia;
- Comply with voluntary the federal standards as defined in Voting Systems Standards, published by the Federal Election Commission; and,

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- Ensure that the equipment and software are designed to present information in formats adaptable to both visual and nonvisual use.

Each system must successfully complete three distinct levels of testing:
- Qualification testing (testing of hardware and software that may be conducted by an Independent Testing Authority);
- Certification testing (to ensure it meets all applicable requirements of the Code of Virginia); and,
- Acceptance testing (conducted by the locality to assure it meets their needs and is identical to the certified system).

In 1995, the management then in place at the State Board imposed a moratorium on the approval of new voting equipment. According to the 1998 review of the agency by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), the decision was based on staffing considerations and other resource issues. JLARC recommended that the State Board resume certifying equipment as prescribed by the Code of Virginia and requested by many local election officials. The State Board resumed equipment certification testing in June 1999, but the pieces of equipment approved this week were the first to complete the certification process.

At the conclusion of the two unanimous certification votes, State Board Chairman Linwood M. Cobb III expressed the Board's appreciation to former Deputy Secretary William G. Atkinson "for the time and leadership and work that he put into this project get us to this point," and thanked Secretary Cameron Quinn "for being an advocate for the certification of new equipment." Mr. Cobb said, "Obviously this is a tremendous step forward for voting in the Commonwealth of Virginia. I think that voters throughout this state are really the winners in this." He added that he hoped the other manufacturers would "get busy and let us get them [certified] so that we can offer a real choice" to the localities.

The members of the State Board of Elections are: Linwood M. Cobb III, Chairman; Michael G. Brown, Vice-Chairman; and Cameron P. Quinn, Secretary. Mr. Brown previously served as Secretary of the State Board, from 1991-1995. The last Virginia certifications of voting equipment were conducted during Mr. Brown's tenure as Secretary.

Appendix to Release

EQUIPMENT CERTIFIED FOR USE IN VIRGINIA ELECTIONS

As of November 2001, there were eight types of equipment approved for use in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each type and the date it was approved is provided below. For information on which localities use which equipment, see the State Board's website at:
http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Election/Voting_In_Va/virginia_voting_systems.htm

AVC DRE Voting Equipment
This direct electronic voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on April 5, 1993.

AVM Voting Equipment
This is a mechanical lever machine. The 40-column model was certified for use in Virginia on January 5, 1950; while the 50-column version was certified on May 24, 1983.

Accu-Vote Voting Equipment
This marksense voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on January 27, 1995.

DRE 1242 Voting Equipment
This direct electronic voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on May 24, 1983.

IES Shoup Voting Equipment
This mechanical lever voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on January 5, 1950.

Optech IIIPE Voting Equipment
This mark sense voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on January 27, 1995.

BRC Punchcard Voting Equipment
This punch card voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on August 12, 1982.

RFS Shoup Voting Equipment
This mechanical lever voting equipment was certified for use in Virginia on January 5, 1950.

Equipment certified February 11, 2002:

ES&S iVotronic^{TM} Voting System (touch screen)
http://www.essvote.com/prod.html

Global AccuTouch TSR6 Voting System (touch screen)
http://www.diebold.com/solutions/election/accuvote_ts.htm

SBE website: http://www.sbe.state.va.us

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